Polychromes in the church in Turzańsk

Josyp Bukowczyk’s polychromes (wall paintings) cover the interior of the entire temple. They were created in 1898. The polychromes that contain elements of Lemko culture are the most noteworthy ones.

On the northern wall of the matroneum, i.e. to the left of the entrance, Bukowczyk made a painting with a signature in the Church Slavonic language: "Jesus, be our guest". It has the shape of a rectangle (25 centimeters x 60 centimeters). It has a blue and red frame. It shows a room of a Lemko cottage. We can see Jesus with a peasant family: a woman, a man in his prime, an old man, and two girls. They are wearing clothes typical of the Lemkos of that time. The painting captures this scene in a very realistic way. The colors are dimmed, with shades of brown, white, and blue dominating the picture.

They are all standing around a round table and three chairs – the only pieces of furniture in the room. They are in the middle of the room. On the left, we can see Jesus coming to the table. His slim figure is much taller than the others. It is shown in semi-profile. Around his long brown hair, we can see a delicate halo. His gentle face is covered with a short brown beard. Jesus is wearing a long loose blue robe, with his subtle hands emerging from the wide sleeves. He is raising his right hand in a gesture of blessing. We can see his bare foot peeking out from the bottom edge of the robe.

To the left of Jesus, there is a man. He is standing in front of us, leaning towards the guest. He is inviting him to the table with his left hand. He has short brown hair. The man is dressed in a fair linen shirt and a brown jacket, the so-called *hunia*. He is also wearing *nohawky*, or pants made of white cloth. In his right hand, the man is clutching a black felt hat (*uhersky*).

We can also see a woman standing with her back to us, stopped in midturn. She is setting a bowl on the table. Her head is turned towards Jesus. She is wearing a white linen *rańtuch*, or headscarf covering her shoulders and back. The woman is also wearing a white blouse. Its wide sleeves have creases at the cuffs and at the height of the elbow. She also has a navy blue skirt flowing down to the middle of the calf – the Lemkos called it a *kabat*. It is heavily creased at the waist. Over the skirt, the woman is wearing a red apron, or *zapaska*. To the left of the woman, there is a chair.

In the background, we can see an old man standing. He is looking at Jesus, while bowing humbly. His hands are intertwined as if in prayer. His stooped silhouette is covered with a white shirt and trousers. The old man is also wearing a blue linen vest, the so-called *łajbyk*.

One of the little girls is standing sideways, between the woman and the old man. She reaches up to the adults’ waist. She has put her hands on the back of the chair. She is staring at Jesus. The girl has fair braided hair. She is wearing a white blouse, a red skirt, and a white apron.

The other girl is standing in front of us, between the man and the old man. She is also leaning on a chair and looking at Jesus. Her hair is covered with a white headscarf tied under her chin. She is wearing a white blouse. The skirt is covered by a white apron.

The walls of the cottage are made of simple logs. The ceiling is covered with boards. The wall straight in front of us has a rectangular window. The frames divide the glass into small squares. This made them easy to replace if they got broken.

The wall on the left has doors and a high threshold typical of a Lemko cottage. The house has earthen floors made of compressed clay.

The scene emanates simplicity. The poverty of the characters and the devotion of the hosts with which they are looking at the extraordinary guest are striking. The realism of the detail is permeated by the aura of spirituality.